




University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Office of the Chancellor

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February 22, 2011

TO: Governor Scott Walker
Rep. Joan Ballweg
Rep. Chris Danou
Sen. Pam Galloway
Sen. Jim Holperin
Rep. Scott Krug
Sen. Julie Lassa
Rep. Louis Molepske
Sen. Luther Olsen
Rep. Kevin Petersen
Rep. Jerry Petrowski
Rep. Mark Radcliffe
Rep. Donna Seidel
Rep. Tom Tiffany
Rep. Amy Sue Vruwink

FROM: Bernie Patterson, Chancellor 

RE: The Plan to Spin Off UW-Madison

Wisconsin's public universities are better *together*.

Better *together* to spur economic development across Wisconsin.

Better *together* to advance the Wisconsin Idea—that the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state.

Better *together* to provide world-class options in higher education to the citizens of Wisconsin within a university system that is the envy of the world.

In the nearly 40 years since the formation of the University of Wisconsin System, its 13 four-year institutions have developed a combined standard of excellence, while each created its own set of strengths that make a wonderfully diverse, relevant, and accessible set of options for the students we serve.

Here at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, for instance:

- Our undergraduate biology program is widely considered to be the finest in the UW System;
- Our College of Natural Resources is the largest, and best undergraduate program

- of its kind in the world;
- We produce more graduates who go on to earn research doctorates than any other regional UW university;
- We consistently lead the entire UW System, including Madison, in the percentage of our graduates who have studied abroad;
- Our fine arts programs are award-winning and nationally competitive;
- Our School of Education, the cornerstone of the university, is among the Midwest's finest.

Similarly outstanding records have been built across the UW System since its formation in 1971. Is it any wonder that three of our universities, including UW-Stevens Point, are ranked in the *U.S. News* Top Ten Public Universities in the Midwest? The UW prestige that the UW comprehensive universities helped to build is known worldwide.

We have recently and urgently asked you to understand the differences between our institution and the fully funded state agencies with which we are wrongly bundled in your Budget Repair Bill and its surrounding restrictions on unionized employees (our faculty and academic staff members are non-union). We now ask you, in the strongest of terms, to understand the advantages we offer, and those that the other UW institutions offer to this state are not interchangeable commodities. Through the collaborations we build as system partners come efficiencies and enterprise. These will wither away, though, if we are divided as competitors vying for increasingly limited resources in ways that we do not today.

In the case of UW-Stevens Point alone, we

- Collaborate with UW-Madison to offer a clinical doctorate in audiology on our campus. This unique degree program would be at risk under your plan;
- Receive more than \$1 million to operate several centers related to natural resources and science education, a tremendous resource for all of Wisconsin, but that funding comes through the UW-Extension, which would be jeopardized under your plan to dismantle the UW System;
- Provide benefit for the state and nation through our forestry research that is partially funded through UW-Madison under the principles of Land Grant education, principles your plan would severely damage.

This list, and the list that precedes it, could go on and on. Governor Walker, we have a record of success to build upon, and a story we would like you to get to know, much better, before you pursue your plans to dismantle the UW System.

Frankly, we believe that a key to our success over the past generation has come with our university's first name. We also understand that your plan to spin-off UW-Madison will include allowing that university to take the UW identity with it. Although our proud history here at Stevens Point goes back to 1894, and has included various institutional identities, our best years, thus far, have been as UW-Stevens Point. We believe that even better years lie ahead.

To lose the UW brand and prestige—that we helped establish and build—in today’s highly competitive climate will cause irreparable harm. You are looking for ways to better administer UW-Madison in the 21st century, but you’ll be sending UW-Stevens Point back to the 19th century with the plan you have chosen.

Yes, we agree with you, Governor Walker, that a public authority is the answer. A public authority for the University of Wisconsin System. Not just a single institution. An innovative move like this, on your part, would lift us all from under a costly and restrictive bureaucracy. This would stamp your administration as one that made the right calls to move Wisconsin forward for years to come. Your legacy could take the UW System to even greater heights, or it could be marked by the relegation of public higher education to a second-class experience for our students.

We need you to take your current plan to dismantle the UW System out of your budget proposal and let it be addressed through legislative procedure that includes time for all voices to be heard. Time for our alumni, who report a 99 percent satisfaction rate with their alma mater, to be heard. And time for you, personally, to come to our university to hear our students as they tell you about the futures they see for themselves, the trails they want to blaze, and the concerns they now share under the specter of your proposal.

My candor reflects my responsibility to the people of UW-Stevens Point and my own conviction that we must be allowed to reach our full potential through the transformational power of higher education.

We are part of the SOLUTION. Please hear us. Please see us for yourself. Please take the time to understand the contributions our university and the entire University of Wisconsin System have made to our state, our potential to help lead us all to better days, and the urgency for you to put forth a plan to keep the UW System together.

cc: Kevin P. Reilly, President
UW System

Charles Pruitt, President
UW System Board of Regents